

What Plant is This?

A late springtime activity

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This lesson is designed for K-2 grades. Lesson developed by participants of a summer workshop at Grant-Kohrs Ranch, National Historic Site.

Montana Science Standards:

Content Standard 1 – Students design, conduct, evaluate and communicate scientific investigations.

Content Standard 2 – Students demonstrate knowledge of properties, forms, changes and interactions of physical and chemical systems.

Content Standard 3 – Students demonstrate knowledge of characteristics, structures and function of living things, the process and diversity of life, and how living organisms interact with each other and their environment.

Subjects: Science, Language Arts and Art

Goal: Students will use a simple dichotomous map to classify plants, which can be made ahead of time using pictures, samples, etc. They will write about what they have discovered and create unique art from nature.

Duration: 5 sessions

Description: Students will identify and categorize major plant groups including: Horsetails, Sedges, Rushes and Grasses; Trees and Shrubs; and Flowering Plants.

Preparation: Teachers can use A Field Guide to the Common Plants by Life Form and Habitat from Grant-Kohrs Ranch (www.nps.gov/grko) to make basic dichotomous map showing plant characteristics which is available by request.

Pre-teach: How to follow a dichotomous map

Discussion questions:

What are the major kinds of plants we have in our area?

Why do we want to identify different kinds of plants?

How would scientists(botanists) use this information?

Activities:

Day 1- Nature Walk (in an area where samples can be taken)

During a nature walk, students collect plant samples and record environmental data. (Collections need to be from all 3 plant groups and include identifying characteristics, such as leaves, flowers, roots and/or cones. Remember to get material for Day 3.)

Day 2 - Students will compare their samples with the dichotomous map to classify their plant according to the 3 groups.

Day 3 – Students will use bisected cones or other plant material to make nature prints along the edges of paper. This will be used later for published writing. (Tempera paint, stamp pads, etc. can be used to dip the material.)

Day 4 – Students will write rough drafts of how they identified what their plant was.

Day 5 – Students will edit and publish written work. Published work will be put on the paper prepared on Day 3.